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ABSTRACT

Given its being at the eastern boundaries of Igbo land in Nigeria, Ohuhu clan was among the last areas to be conquered by British imperialists. It was also among the last areas in Igbo land to have the impact of white missionaries. Thus, in terms of modern education, commerce, industry, and civil service administrations as dictated by the colonial master, Ohuhu clan was a late comer. In spite of its late arrival, however, Ohuhu clan had at the middle of the last century shown that it was a formidable force to be reckoned with in the colonial master's dispensation. For instance, when the people saw the need for formal education they set themselves to the task of building schools to meet the education needs of Ohuhu sons and daughters. Afuigiri, Umuagu, Umuawa, Nkwo Egwu, Umuhu central schools are community schools built without mission or government support. Today, however, many years after Nigerian independence, Ohuhu is a shadow of itself. This paper contends that it is possible for Uhuhu clan to regain its lost glory--the attainment of sustainable development is definitely "sine qua non" if Ohuhu's children are to be assured their rightful place in Nigeria and the world. The paper does four things--it: explains what sustainable development (SD) is and the features that make it possible; argues that SD will be elusive if the generality of Ohuhu people are not functionally literate; presents a model of a literacy program that can enhance SD in Ohuhu; and examines possible constraints on the attainment of sustainable development and how best to overcome these constraints. (Contains 14 references.) (NKA)

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Regaining Our Lost Glory: Appropriating the Catalytic Germ in Sustainable Development Parameters.

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REGAINING OUR LOST GLORY: APPROPRIATING THE CATALYTIC GERM IN SUSTAINABLE AND DEVELOPMENT PARAMETERS

The war ended on January 12 1970, and Gowon declared a "no victor, no vanquished" situation. Gowon set up a Reconstruction, Reconciliation and Rehabilitation (RRR) policy to reintegrate the Igbo into Nigerian politics. Now what has happened in the last twenty-five years? Gowon's 3Rs tuned out to be a big hoax. The industrial technological revolution achieved during war was systematically destroyed by Nigerian leaders due to petty jealousy. Ndigbo property became abandoned property. A fraudulent banking policy was put in place to defraud the Igbos of the little they had. In the last twenty-five years the Igbos have been sidelined in the business of Government in Nigeria. A quarter of the nation's population no longer matter in Nigeria. In the federal establishments like the Army, Police, Navy, Air Force and Internal Affairs, the story is the same. Ndigbo have become second-class citizens. Organized and official marginalization has forced them into abandoning education for business. Prominent Igbo sons are no longer allowed to contest in elections. IGBO STATE UNION was banned. Through a deliberate policy, the Igbo states cannot boast of any meaningful physical government presence. The multibillion naira steel projects estimated to employ 100,000 people in 1990 were sited in the North and the West of the country. Igbo States have been without roads and other infrastructural facilities since 1970, apart from the ones they built for themselves. They provided airports for themselves.

The situation has reached an alarming stage that the Igbos cannot continue to fold their arms. But if the truth must be told, marginalization of the Igbos is usually in two parts-the one from others against Ndigbo and the one against Ndigbo by Ndigbo. Why should a people who want to be taken serious in Nigeria abandon education for business? Why are they running away from politics? Why do they have leadership crisis since the end of civil war? Why are they shying away from investing in the newspaper industry? It has been said that the education of a citizen is the heart of the modern state-a state which fails to offer an equal level of educational opportunities to its citizens is penalizing the poor for the benefit of the rich. There cannot be a responsible state until there is an educated electorate. Politics? Harold Laskj says that politics is superior to economics. Out of the three modes of political power acquisition and sustenance all over the world, to wit, military might, economic power, and intellectual strength, the Igbos have only intellectual endowment, which is perhaps the weakest of the three in the Nigerian condition. What this means is that those who have political power have everything. A single policy from the government can wipe a lot of people out of business on matter how big the business. Chief Ike Oranusi, executive Chairman of New Resources Group, Lagos says: "We are letting them (the Igbos) know that without political power they are incapacitated."
*Igbokwe, J (1995) **Igbos Twenty Five Years after Biafra (108 – 109)**, Lagos, Advent Communications Ltd.*

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Introduction

There is no doubt that Ohuhu clan has a past for which every living Ohuhu son and daughter should be proud of. Before Ohuhu clan was subjected to the intrigues of self destruction by white human traffickers who used their more advanced technology to set Ohuhu people against themselves, as they did in other African nation groups, Ohuhu clan had a culture and civilization which compared with the best there were any where in the world at that time. Our iron and steel industry for which the people of Umukabia were very famous produced enough metal wares that made Ohuhu the market to buy from in the Gulf of Guinea and the then Bight of Biafra. In the textile industry, the feats achieved by Nkata and Nkwo Egwu were commonplace all over the Gulf of Guinea and Bight of Biafra. Although the republican nature of Nigbo was more pronounced in Ohuhu land than any where else in Igbo land, it was an adequate means of governance that made law and order prevalent in Ohuhu clan and of course made Ohuhu land a place of considerable safety during the height of the slave trade when traveling in Igbo land was a risky affair. In the area of commerce, Ohuhu served as the middlemen between the coastal states and as far the hinterland as Afikpo. Our traditional educational system was superb. Although Ohuhu clan did not have formal education before the coming of the white imperialists, education in Ohuhu clan was so functional and people-centered that it met the needs of our people and was quite adequate for the perpetuation of our civilization and culture - See **Ohuhu In The 21st Century – A community in search of socio-political and economic transformation** (2000) Ohuhu Union, Lagos.

Given its being at the eastern boundaries of Igbo land, Ohuhu clan was among the last areas to be conquered by the British imperialists. It was also among the last areas in Igbo land to have the impact of white missionaries. Thus in terms of modern education, commerce, industry and civil service administration as dictated by the colonial master, Ohuhu clan was more or less a late comer. However, in spite of its late arrival, Ohuhu clan had at the middle of the last century shown that it was a formidable force to be reckoned with in the colonial master's dispensation. For instance, in the field of education, Ohuhu made great marks. An Ohuhu son Dr. Gabriel Uwakwe Onukaogu was in 1953 among the first five Igbo men before independence to bag a PH.D. In the field of politics, although an Ohuhu son Dr Michael Iheonukara Okpara was before Nigerian independence the youngest member of the Eastern Nigeria House of Assembly, he later in 1960 at Nigeria's independence became the Premier of Eastern Nigeria. Eastern Nigeria later metamorphosed into Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Bayelsa, Imo, Ebonyi, Enugu, Anambra and Abia states. Apart from being the leader of the largest and most populous nationalist party in Nigeria – National Convention of Nigerian Citizens – Dr. Okpara proved himself to be one of the most dynamic, people service-oriented, resourceful and God fearing leader that Nigeria has ever produced. In the area of civil service administration, Ohuhu in the likes of the Ukelonus, Okezies and Ogbuagus, has showcased some of the most invaluable technocrats that Nigerian has ever produced.

In terms of community mobilization, Ohuhu clan is one that can be very easily mobilized if the cause is just and relevant to the advancement of the well being of the people. For instance, when the people saw the need for formal education they set themselves the task of building schools to meet the formal education needs of Ohuhu sons and daughters. Afuigiri, Umuagu, Umuawa, Nkwo Egwu, Umuhu central schools etc. are community schools built without mission or government support. It is instructive to note that Ohuhu has never had a mission school. By the early 1960s when the secondary school needs of Ohuhu daughters and sons began to soar beyond expectations, Ohuhu sons and daughters rose to the challenge by setting up Ohuhu Community Grammar School, Crusaders Secondary School, Afuigiri Girls Secondary School and Williams Memorial Secondary School. All the above secondary schools were basically a private sector initiative. In terms of infra structure, personnel and curriculum goals and objectives, the schools compared with the best there were then in Nigeria. Today products of these schools can be found holding key positions in different parts of the world and especially in our country Nigeria. Before the Nigerian civil war Ohuhu had a very viable water scheme which made portable water available to the average Ohuhu home. The water scheme was primarily a community based initiative. The foundation of the water scheme is still available for use today and although the core equipment and pump sets had been looted by military administrators in the then Imo and Abia states, the foundation of the water scheme is so solid that with very minimal costs it can be easily rehabilitated to meet the portable water needs of Ohuhu land and its neighbors. A fundamental step which would have completely changed the technological terrain of Ohuhu land was taken before the civil war. This was the bringing in of electricity by communal efforts into the nooks and crannies of Ohuhu land. We know that without power both small scale and large scale industries

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can not thrive. Unfortunately, the deliberate killing of the electricity project by the powers that be by not providing the basic but central infra structure essential for the functioning of the community electricity project has today denied Ohuhu land the development of the industrial base needed to transform the land and make Ohuhu the industrial model and base of present day Nigeria and the pride of the black race both in Africa and the Diaspora.

From the accounts we have provided above, we can see that the Ohuhu clan of today is a far cry from what Ohuhu was before Nigerian independence. Ohuhu's steady decline in its culture and civilization started about 1966 during the organized pogrom and ethnic cleansing perpetrated against Ndigbo by the Hausa Fulani oligarchy with the tacit support of most ethnic groups in Nigeria. As a matter of fact during the peak of the civil war, with Umuahia being the seat of the Biafran Government, Ohuhu land was subjected to intensive federal bombardment by air and land. Thus at the end of the civil war some of the laudable achievements of Ohuhu land had been reduced to rubbles. Today Ohuhu like the rest of Ndigbo is a shadow of itself. In the area of politics, industry, agriculture, civil service, education and private sector initiative, Ohuhu land begs for rehabilitation and re-launching from its present doldrums that are reminiscent of the 18th century to the science and cyber technology of this century.

This is not the time to ask how we got to the sordid, distasteful and shameful position we find ourselves. This is not the time to look for scapegoats or find out who brought us to where we are now. This is not the time for us to continue to berate the deliberate efforts of the Nigerian power system to perpetually make us serfs in our country. What I think should concern us is regarding how to get out of our present situation and move on to be what we want to be. The position of this paper is that it is possible for us to regain our lost glory. Besides, we can also surpass whatever feasts we had attained in the past. We believe that the attainment of sustainable development in Ohuhu is possible. The attainment of sustainable development is definitely sine qua non if Ohuhu's future i.e. its children are to be assured their rightful place in Nigeria and the world.

In the rest of this paper, we shall do four things. First, we shall try to explain what sustainable development (SD) is and the features that make SD possible. Second, we shall try to argue that SD will be elusive if the generality of Ohuhu people are not functionally literate. Third, we shall try to present a model of a literacy program that can enhance SD in Ohuhu. Finally, we shall try to examine the possible constraints on the attainment of sustainable development. In doing so we shall try to suggest how best we can overcome the constraints.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND FUNCTIONAL DEVELOPMENT-ORIENTED LITERACY

If Ohuhu clan is to occupy its rightful place in national and international affairs then we the sons and daughters of Ohuhu must spend and be spent in order to ensure that every facet of Ohuhu culture and civilization shows observable evidences that it is improving and that the improvement is being sustained year in year out. It is only when this happens that we can say that Sustainable development (SD) is taking place in Ohuhu. SD of course is not a one shot affair. Unless development is perpetuated it can not be sustainable.

In recent years SD has been used as the index for measuring national growth. More specifically it is a process in which, ***"The exploitation of the resources, the duration of investment, the orientation of technological development and institutional changes are made consistent with future and present needs" (World Commission on Environmental Development, 1987).*** To achieve SD there must be deliberate policies which :

(a) Catalyses growth while reducing poverty,

(b) Facilitate the provisions and efficient utilization of sanitation and health services, in order to improve living standards,

(c) Empower the masses and involve them in vital decisions that affect their destiny and civilization,

(d) Encourage programs which discourage population explosions in order to reduce the pressure on national resource base,

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(c) Enhance science and technological advancement especially for increasing productivity in environmentally sound ways and
(f) Enable the generality of the people to acquire competencies for the effective and efficient management of resources (See Onukaogu, 1998 for a more detailed discussion of SD in national development).

In order to attain the above minimum requirements for SD in Ohuhu and position Ohuhu to play a leadership role in Nigeria and Africa, then we Ohuhu's sons and daughters drawing from the experiences of the developed economies must do four things. First, we must begin to take immediate steps to effectively and efficiently renew and manage our resources. In the 1940s and 1950s it was possible to harvest crabs, giant akri (a type of edible frog) and ayauma (a type of nutritious and medicinal fern) from the banks of Iyi Ogwe in Umungasi. As seasonal as Iyi Ogwe was, it was possible in the peak of the rainy season to harvest prawns from the stream. In spite of the fact that river basins (Imo, Eme, Ikwu rivers to mention a few)abound in Ohuhu, marine life has been so depleted in Ohuhu that today crabs, prawns, akri and ayauma to mention just a few can not be found in ohuhu's marine resources. Before the Oso Beke episode between the 1890s and 1900s (Esobe, 2000), iroko trees and exotic raffia palms abound in Ohuhu. In spite of the fact that Ohuhu is within the rain forest, savannah is steadily replacing the rich rain forest that served the needs of our people in the time past. The irokos and exotic raffia palms are going and in some cases have completely disappeared. We will like to make it clear that unless we take steps to deliberately renew the flora and fauna in Ohuhu, we will so deplete them that in the next three or four decades, Ohuhu's sons and daughters might curse us for not leaving enough natural resources for their survival. We must take urgent steps to properly manage our resources. The post harvest losses in Ohuhu are absolutely uncalled for. With very simple technology, we can preserve and process our harvests in such a way that the post harvest losses will be very minimal if not completely eliminated.

The second thing we must do to promote SD in Ohuhu in the light of the above six minimum requirements for SD, is that we must facilitate information dissemination in Ohuhu. Igbokwe (2000) rightly holds the view that one of the reasons why Ndigbo are taken for granted in Nigeria is that Ndigbo does not have a powerful media that disseminates information about Ndigbo to the rest of Nigeria. The Yoruba in Nigeria dictate all national agenda in Nigeria because they have very powerful media that make the Yoruba point of view seem as if it is the national point of view. Today Ohuhu does not have any media investments that articulate even within Ohuhu communities and Abia state information about Ohuhu. Any community that hoards information closes the door for SD against itself. Nigerian military regimes in spite of being in control of enormous Nigeria human and material resources failed to perform and initiate sustainable national development because they deliberately hindered information flow. Information dissemination at the micro level that is village and community leveles, promotes understanding, harmony good will tolerance etc. without which SD can not take place. Today because there are no inter and intra community information centers in Ohuhu, our people albeit our children do not know themselves. For instance, because of insufficient information, Ohuhu sons and daughters here in the US have rather than revamp the ailing Ohuhu water scheme, rather than lobby and get the Nigerian federal government to list the Ohuhu water scheme as one of the many water schemes to be rehabilitated by the federal government, talk of starting a new water scheme this time at the Eme River specifically targeted to the people of Umuhu. Assuming the Eme project succeeds and water abounds in Umuhu while the taps are are dry in Okaiuga, what message would we be passing on to Ohuhu children that are from Okaiuga? While information technology is bringing the nations of the developed world together to form single markets and currencies, we in Ohuhu think in chunks and compartments. Information dissemination is so central to survival that people can ignorantly destroy themselves if they are not adequately informed about certain issues that affect their lives. For instance, through ignorance our people ferment cassava in our streams and ponds. Unfortunately, the cassava releases to the stream huge amounts of cyanide. Thus over the years we have steadily through cyanide pollution virtually destroyed the marine life in Ohuhu land. The Yorubas who are better informed, ferment their cassava at home and so have been able to preserve their marine life more than us. Even if we can not at the macro level put in place a viable information disseminating machinery, we must start now at the micro level to take appropriate steps to get our people better informed about themselves and their world.

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The third step we must take to promote SD in Ohuhu land is to promote the art of good governance. Our experience with military rule over the past thirty in more years, shows that any form of dictatorship can not enhance SD. Where governance is open, participatory, respects the views of the people and is democratic, the dividends of good governance are bound to reach the generality of the people. We in Ohuhu must do all we can to promote good governance Nigeria because it is only through good governance that the rights and privileges of Ohuhu can best be respected and maintained in Nigeria. Finally, we want to add SD is enhanced if the economic and market policies of government are promoted by all and sundry. When we through smuggling, refusal to pay our taxes subvert government market and economic policies, we hinder the attainment of SD.

We want to add that these four indices, i) information dissemination, ii) resource renewal and management, iii) the art of good governance and iv) the promotion of economic and market policies of government which are indispensable to the attainment of SD, can not hold sway in Ohuhu land if the generality of Ohuhu people are not functionally literate. Given the poor and sorry state of primary and secondary schools in Ohuhu land, what the products of Ohuhu primary and secondary schools get is at best a form of basic literacy. The current mass literacy program embarked upon by the Nigerian Mass Education Agencies (NMEA) for our adult population also provides basic literacy (BL). BL cannot provide the four identified SD prerequisites indices. As a matter of fact because the BL programs of both Ohuhu primary and secondary schools and NMEA do not provide post basic literacy reading and writing materials and activities, their products lapse into illiteracy in no time. If the literacy empowerment for Ohuhu sons and daughters are to catalyze the attainment of SD then the BL in Ohuhu must be replaced with Functional and Development-Oriented Literacy (FDL).

Functional and development-oriented literacy as a germ for catalyzing SD

FDL provides an individual with literacy empowerment. Literacy empowerment itself makes one an effective and efficient user of language. It makes one effective in all of speaking, listening, reading and writing (Atwell 1986). Literacy empowerment facilitates literal, interpretive, critical, creative and aesthetic comprehension. Anyone who has literacy empowerment can not just be content with passively receiving and giving information. Such a fellow is usually actively involved in meaning making, negotiation, construction and reconstruction. Literacy empowerment enables one to actively search, store, retrieve and utilize information. It also provides enablement for problem solving, the art of inquiry and questioning an author when information search is textbased.

The way we have conceived literacy empowerment imposes on us an examination of what literacy is. For this exercise we are not restricting literacy to merely the ability to read and write. Literacy to us is the effective and efficient use of language in which the individual is able to rehearse, discuss and dialogue what has been read. We will also like to see literacy in terms of the print demands of *"occupational, civic, community and personal functions"* (Venezky. P7). Literacy, no doubt, imposes on one the need to process documents. In doing this, it involves *the use of symbols, for personal, community and social communication* (Cases in literacy, p 1989 p.5). Thus underlying literacy is communication. It is to us reading interpretively, critically, creatively and aesthetically, and writing clearly. Literacy thus pre-supposes the ability to think critically, and to use language effectively in any medium of message conveyance (Onukaogu, 1997). Literacy in the modern sense, especially in view of the impact of electronic media cuts across all shades of human endeavours. In literacy instruction efforts, we will like to consider it as *The full array of the communicative arts (reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing) and to focus on the visual arts of dance, film, video and computer technology:* (1997), PI IRA announcement leaflet and order from for the book *Handbook of Research on Teaching Literacy Through the Communicative and Visual Arts).*

Our perception of literacy has three serious implications for FDL. First if FDL is to be effective and efficient it must have a supportive, diverse and rich literature base. Such a literature base must include the extensive and intensive use of **FICTION, FACT (Trade books) Content Area Textbook and Newsreel** (Newspaper, Magazines, newsletters, comics, cartoons, lists e.t.c). Secondly, the use of literature in FDL must transcend solo activities. Communal reading that involves a holistic use of language is sine qua non. Finally, it will involve extensive reading, rehearsing discussing dialoging and writing. The role of reading in the use of literature implies that Reading is central in meaning making, meaning construction,

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reconstruction and negotiations. Reading therefore is the pivot of literacy. Our position regarding the centrality of reading in literacy is also shared of Veneczky who contends that:

> *Reading is clearly primary to any definition of literacy. Writing as a means of recording communication presupposes reading otherwise it is mere copying. Similarly, numeric, and document knowledge are supplementary to reading and have no role in the literacy equation without it. The skilled reader, ignorant of numeric and document skill will still obtain meaning from print. On the other hand, the non reader who is skilled in arithmetic and in some document skills will stumble in an environment based on print (1990 p.9.).*

The effective and efficient teaching of reading in FDL so that it can enhance the effective use of language, creativity, problem solving and the art of inquiry is a task that must be addressed by those involved in the design and implementation of our literacy curriculum. If we are to use FDL to empower our literacy learners to facilitate the attainment of SD, the knowledge, attitudes and skills acquired through FDL should be capable of catalyzing and sustaining SD. Four minimum requirements must be met if the learners are to be so empowered. First, there must be a use of diverse, rich and robust literature. Secondly, the methodologies used in implementing the FDL curriculum should complement the curriculum content. Thirdly, the home, the community and the literacy centres must collaborate in ensuring that the aims and objectives of the FDL curriculum are met. Finally, the learner as a decisive factor in the FDL must be given a central role in the designing, implementation, evaluation and renewal of the FDL curriculum.

A literacy model for actualizing SD

We will like to suggest a two pronged approach in order to use literacy to catalyze SD in Ohuhu land. In the first approach, we need to evolve a package for our rural population. Over 80% Ohuhu people live in the rural area. Majority of them are women. Our rural women need literacy empowerment in order for them to be able to play their roles in bringing about desirable changes in the knowledge, attitudes and skills of Ohuhu children and youth. The second approach is to improve and enhance the literacy education package in use in our primary and secondary schools.

An Integrated Rural Development Paradigm for Women Ohuhu rural areas

We recognize that the future of Ohuhu or our future to be more precise is our children. Whatever foundation we leave for them today is basically the foundation they will build upon. If, for instance, we empower them to love and appreciate the dignity of labor, industry and honesty of purpose, they will grow up to provide not only sound resilient manpower to oil our industries and keep our culture and civilization aglow, they will also be men and women who will love the truth, cherish integrity and strive to lay down their lives for the good of Ohuhu and Nigeria. Besides, if we provide qualitative and quantitative nutrients to meet the needs of their body and soul, they will grow up as healthy strong men and women who have living consciences.

Arising from the position taken above, is the need to ensure that the Ohuhu mother is adequately empowered to ensure that she emotionally, physically and spiritually meets the basic growth needs of the Ohuhu child. This is because she is the first person the child interacts with right from the womb and with whom the child stays most time. Since the bulk of Ohuhu mothers are to be found in the rural areas, there is the need to ensure that rural women in Ohuhu are sufficiently equipped to nurture the Ohuhu child.

Our interactions with mothers in the rural areas unfortunately show that our rural women are the least equipped persons that can manage the growth of the Ohuhu child. Our available evidence shows that the plight of our rural women is very harsh. For instance, our average rural woman gives birth to 6-7 children – she will probably bury 2-3. Her life expectancy is 56 years. She farms her husband's land 6-9 months per year and probably works in the informal sector to improve her income. She also walks several kilometers daily to fetch water, search several hours for fire wood and spends about 2-3 hours preparing the family's meal. Besides, she is expected to fulfill many roles – as spouse, mother, income generator, caretaker of the sick children and old ones, manager of the household, not to mention the duties towards her own extended family. There is no doubt that much is expected from the Ohuhu rural woman. Unfortunately, our society is not educating her enough to fulfill her roles in the rural areas. Very little information is at her disposal to learn how to fulfill these roles.

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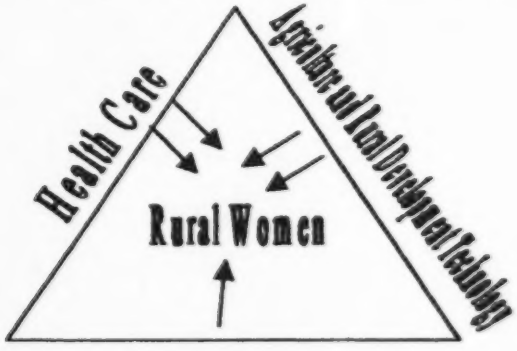
We do not need any extensive study to identify the appalling needs of the Ohuhu rural woman. It is beyond reasonable doubt that the Ohuhu rural woman needs education that would impact positively on her and enable her to do better whatever she wants or desires to do for her family, children and community. Our cursory observation shows that about 85% of our rural women are not functionally literate. What is worse, a high percentage of the younger ones are affected. 90% of them aged 25-29 years are semiliterate. Many of them abandoned formal education early in order to work and get married. The customs and tradition of our people and poverty in the families also affect some. These women cannot go back to school, yet they have many years of active life left. The motive to learn reading and writing is high. About 75% of them have expressed a burning desire to be functionally literate. We however feel that if literacy is to be used to enhance their well being, it must be functional and development-oriented.

Literacy can only be a catalyst in the universal empowerment programs that our rural women need in order to live meaningfully and profitably. They need to know how to domesticate their environments so that they can exploit the resources there. They therefore need to be good managers of their resources and be sufficiently equipped to renew and replenish their depleting resources. Given the great distances our rural communities walk to conventional hospitals and health centers there is the need for our rural women to be basically educated in primary health care delivery so that they can be minimally free from certain crippling diseases which can be controlled if certain precautions are taken. Thus, what is most needed, as a matter of utmost urgency is an integrated rural development program that is multidimensional but which will minimally include: literacy, agriculture, rural technology enhancement and health care. It is hoped that such a program will not only alleviate poverty, hunger, disease and squalor in our rural communities but will also enhance the self esteem of our rural women by making them active collaborators in rural development initiatives.

The ultimate beneficiaries of the empowerment of our rural women will be their children. Not only will mothers be sufficiently empowered to meet their children's physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs, the home would become a positive facilitative catalyst for a good head start for the children.

We therefore propose an integrated rural development paradigm for rural women, which will directly affect the children of women in the rural area. This paradigm can be represented by a triangle.



Literacy: At the base of the triangle is literacy. Literacy is expected to catalyze development in five ways. First, through the promotion of critical/creative thinking and enhancement of self esteem, literacy will expose the women to the art of good governance. They will therefore want to know how to ensure that their voices are considered in the governance of their homes and community. Second, literacy will expose the women to proven trends in the art of resource management and renewal. They may not be affluent but they will definitely live well through the apt management of their resources. Third, through literacy the women will acquire the art of information dissemination especially the promotion of a community newsletter. The newsletter will enable the women to get to know themselves and collaborate. Fourth, through literacy classes the women will learn the rudiments of utilizing market policies put in place by governments for enhancing the well being of our people. They will therefore not frustrate government's efforts. Finally, through literacy the rural woman will get to know how the child can be equipped with the

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basic skills and strategies for achieving self fulfillment and self esteem. Story telling, bed time story and reading and making the home a literacy center will become a rule and not an exception.

Agriculture and Rural Technology: The right side of the triangle will emphasize agriculture, modernization and the apt use of local technologies. Women in development programs put in place by international agencies like the UNDP have failed woefully because in the design of such programs rural women are not consulted. Secondly, their ecological set up are not fully taken into consideration with the result that solutions that are not in keeping with what the rural woman is familiar with are proffered. Thirdly, and this we consider as very important, trades and professions which had made other communities tick were imposed on the rural women. Because such trades and professions were not in keeping with what the women are familiar with, they abandoned such trades and professions whenever they experienced the least set back.

Since no literacy empowerment program can thrive when the participants in the program are famished, agriculture and the apt use of indigenous technology as part of our integrated rural development paradigm are pursued in such a way that the inputs from the rural women are highly sought for and put in place. A careful study and analysis of the environment and the life style of the women, through a lived-in study will be undertaken. A synthesis of inputs from the women and suggestions based on our long standing experience should form the nucleus of the agriculture and rural technology development component of our integrated development paradigm. The ultimate goal will be the attainment of adequacy in food production, food storage and the utilization of research findings in our universities and research institutes, which can transform and enhance agriculture production in our rural areas. For instance, the use of animal manure instead artificial fertilizers to enhance crop yield and the use of wastes from processed palm kernels as feed stocks for livestock have been perfected in our research institutes. Although the support technology for putting in place these research findings is simple, our rural women are not aware of the findings and so cannot utilize or implement them. In implementing the agriculture aspect of our integrated development paradigm, efforts can be made to enable our rural women to know and digest common place innovative technologies.

Health Care Delivery: At the left side of the triangle is health enhancing strategies. The rural women will be exposed to ways by which they and their children can keep healthy through proper use of the food resources in the community so that their diets would be balanced. Simple hygiene like proper disposal of refuse, preservation of water sources, boiling of drinking water before use etc. that would enhance the health of the women and their children would be shared with them. The timely vaccination of children to prevent such deadly diseases like diphtheria, whooping cough, poliomyelitis, tuberculosis etc. would be encourage. Family planning as a way of enhancing the quality of life in the home would be emphasized.

Reinforcing the Literacy Education Package in African and Secondary Schools in Ohuhu land

Since 1966 when the military intervened in our national polity, primary and secondary schools all over the country have been allowed to decay. Given the hidden agenda by various succeeding Nigerian governments to annihilate Ndigbo, primary and secondary schools in Igbo land especially in Ohuhu have suffered the worst neglect and abuse since formal education was introduced in Ohuhu. The atmosphere of Ohuhu schools are so hostile to pupils that the generality of Ohuhu children if left on their own would not want to go school. Since the surrender value and impact of schooling on learners are so negligible, many Ohuhu sons like their counterparts in other Igbo land drop out of school and take to trading. Statistics now show that there are more girls in our schools than there are boys. Even then the girls who chose to complete their secondary school education end up without competencies to show for attending secondary school. Available research evidence shows that the generality of our students who complete secondary education cannot read and write fluently in Igbo and English.

The omen is bad. The future is bleak for Ohuhu. Any race or people that ignore the education of its children do so at their own peril. As things are, the federal, state and local governments are not likely to make any meaningful commitment or impact towards revamping and enhancing quality primary and secondary school in Ohuhu land. We Ohuhu sons and daughters must therefore act quickly now to redress the ugly situation and give our children the quality education that they deserve. We must revisit literacy education in Ohuhu primary and secondary schools. This is because literacy is the core of any meaningful, profitable

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and result-oriented education. Our scientists, medical practitioners, engineers and mathematicians can not thrive without functional and development-oriented literacy. We can not also have creative writers like Chinua Achebe, Cyprian Ekwensi etc. if our children are not functionally literate. The effectiveness and efficiency of our children in commerce, industry, politics, the uniformed services, judiciary and civil service can be enhanced if our primary and secondary school learners are functionally literate.

We would like to suggest three ways by which we can enthrone functional and development-oriented literacy in our schools. First, we need to promote a reading culture in our primary and secondary schools. To do this we need to initiate a book flood in our schools. Without books the interest to read would be very minimal. Secondly, we need to promote reading clubs in our schools. Reading clubs would provide the avenue for the pupils to dialogue regarding what they read, listen to others talk about what they read and of courses write about what they read. We also need to reestablish such clubs as literacy and debating societies, mock parliaments, young discoverers' clubs, dramatic societies e.t.c. where our pupils can use language creatively and critically in real life communication.

The second step we need to take in promoting a reading culture is in the retraining of our primary and secondary school teachers so that they can become aware of current and proven approaches in the effective and efficient teaching of literacy. If classroom teachers are pedagogically competent and experienced in the teaching of literacy, they would be in a position to empower their pupils with functional and development-oriented literacy. Finally, we need to connect the home with our schools so that the average Ohuhu home would begin to take keen interests in what goes on in our schools. Every Ohuhu parent must be encouraged to make infallible sacrifices that would ensures the survival and growth of the school system in Ohuhu land.

Conclusion: Possible Constraints and Solutions.

We have argued in this paper that if Ohuhu clan is to regain its lost glory, Ohuhu daughters and sons in Ohuhu, Nigeria and the Diaspora must of necessity put in place a package that will enhance sustainable development in Ohuhu. We have tried to argue that functional and development-oriented literacy is one germ that can catalyze the attainment of sustainable development in Ohuhu land. Apart from explaining what functional and development-oriented literacy is, we have postulated a two pronged approach that can lead to its facilitation. One approach we postulated is an integrated holistic model designed to empower rural women in Ohuhu land with functional and development-oriented literacy. The other is the involvement of Ohuhu community in revamping and revitalizing primary and secondary schools in Ohuhu land so that each Ohuhu school can become a veritable learning center that will be learner friendly and that can reinvigorate in the Ohuhu child a love for reading. Both approaches if vigorously and vibrantly implemented, we hope will facilitate the attainment of a vibrant and robust reading culture in Ohuhu.

We are not unmindful that the two approaches might have some serious constraints. For instance, we are aware that the current lethargy against learning by Ohuhu youth might make them not want to be involved in any program that would mentally task them. Furthermore, we are aware that the abject poverty in the land might make both the youth and elders in the land not want to make sacrifices that would deny them of an immediate square meal. The way therefore to the attainment of functional and development-oriented literacy in Ohuhu is so tough, rough and hazardous that unless we approach the implementation of the two pronged approach with care, our efforts will back fire.

The alternative of not doing anything at all is unthinkable. As far as we are concerned, it is cruel, unjust and inhuman to ignore the development of a robust and vibrant literacy for Ohuhu people. From the abundant historical evidence before us, we know that the great technologies of Africa including our own famous iron and steel industry could not survive their originators because they were not documented for succeeding generations to know what had been achieved and so be in a position to improve on them. This is because our ancestors who developed such technologies did not have a literacy culture for documenting the key and flash points of their civilizations (Onukaogu 2001). Thus if Ohuhu is not to repeat the tragic errors of its ancestors, Ohuhu must in no way compromise with the literacy development in the land. Besides, we also know that the developed economies of the world are economies where literacy has thrived for centuries and where immense investments are made annually to enhance literacy development.

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What is the way forward? The way forward is that those of us who have benefited immensely from the gains of literacy must be ready to make immense sacrifices to put in place a frame work that would make the people of Ohuhu collaborate in implementing the two-pronged approach we have advocated in this paper. Those of you in the US like the Jews, the Ghanaians and South Africans, have done must plough back enough resources to Ohuhu so that its people can want to invest in education and literacy empowerment. We will like to suggest that you direct your efforts to three areas. First, we need to set up three information centers in Ohuhu land. One should be cited in the south, the other in the centre and the other in the North of Ohuhu. Each center should be equipped with multimedia where Ohuhu people can go to acquire information about anything in the world. Each center should be a place where they can disseminate personal, home and community information. Each center should have rooms for inter and intra community meetings. It should make provisions for holiday reading clinics and where authors can come and read to children. It should also have centers for relaxation where state of the art films can be shown and where visiting troupes can perform. Once the people of Ohuhu get hooked to the pleasures that emanate from standard information centers they will replicate such centers.

The second thing to be done is to reawaken the teaching of literature in Ohuhu primary and secondary schools. One of the reasons why we have remained technologically backward and under-developed is that we have failed to domesticate our environments, and exploit their resources. We do not have the inquisitive and questioning minds, and attitudes needed to unravel mysterious environmental phenomena. When such phenomena confront us, we do not ask questions. We regard them as sacrosanct and we worship them. We cannot domesticate what we do not comprehend. We therefore need rich and robust literature that can enhance our cognitive comprehension of our environments. We need literature that can facilitate positively our attitudes towards our environments and the people in them. We need literature that shows us how to pragmatically use our hands and physical senses in dealing with, appreciating taming and exploiting our environments particularly its human and natural resources. When a robust, rich and diverse literature base is made available in our FDL programs, our adult learners will acquire the knowledge, attitude and skills that can make them catalyse SD. Finally, when we talk of literature being rich, we simply mean that the contents are extensive and diverse. Information changes one's vision. When the information is obtained in multiple ways, it enhances and enriches one's perspectives the more. Apart from enabling one to acquire multiple ways of knowing and expressing, literature has other very useful ways of facilitating the knowledge, attitudes and skills of FDL learners. For instance, stories which are important elements of literature provide *comparable sort of framework for remembering because of this trait and because good stories are intrinsically interesting they make events memorable* (Culliman 1991. P.XV) so, if we want our literacy learners to cultivate the ability to recall, we must "bombard" them with stories. We can through stories give cognitive and emotional coherence to our students' experiences. We can enable them to construct and negotiate their social identity and also to invest their experiential landscape with moral significance (Rosen, 1992). Thus *when we through reading aloud, sustained silent reading, story telling, story retailing e.t.c, promote the use of story in the school curriculum, we help not only to enhance the language use of our children but also their critical and analytic thinking. Literature as Culliman has rightly observed speaks to our elemental need for story and search for meaning (Culliman 1992) Onukaogu and Ohia 1997. P.51).* We can also use literature to promote inter/intra ethnic harmony amongst our adults. This is because, good literature can develop and extend understandings and attitudes important to living in our multicultural society. Through reading, *young people can begin to understand the effect of social and economic problems in the lives of the ordinary individual (Bishop 1992 P.81).* As has been rightly observed, multicultural *literature can also show how we are connected to one another through emotions, needs and desires - experiences that are common to us. It can enable us to understand, appreciate and celebrate the difference among us - those things that make each culture group unique (Bishop 1992. P18).* Since it is true that:

> *Children's literature let them know adults in their society consider appropriate ways of behaving, believing and assessing who and what are important, children who find their own experiences mirrored in books receive a kind of affirmation of themselves and their culture (Bishop. 1992 P.82),*

we feel that adults too can acquire similar benefits if they are exposed to rich, robust and diverse multicultural literature. We completely agree that *if we are to continue to prosper as a moral people and a free people, we need students in our schools whose ethical behaviours and personal values are affected and positively by what they read and by what they do as a result of what they read* (Meaning 1995. P 658). We

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can therefore use literature to remold the lives of Ohuhu people - both old and young - so that they can cherish and uphold values that promote the well being of our society. Finally, we will like to add that literature can facilitate communal learning programs. We share the view that:

> *Apart from enhancing our aesthetic experience literature helps us to form a community of learners. When we discuss a text we learn from other people. We have new insights to issues we glossed over. We learn how to respect other people's views and ideas. We learn to subject our ego to our community and by taking turns in telling our stories, sharing our views and listening, we learn the rudiments of orderliness. Besides, story telling enables us to lay and enshrine the foundation of good governance and democracy. We begin to learn that we are duty bound to respect other peoples', views. We are kind of compelled to acquire the patience in turn taking. A good literature program is a sure bet for the foundations of good governance (Onukaogu and Ohia 1997 P.52).*

Thus a rich, diverse and robust literature base can enable our adult literacy learners not only to be adequately informed about their environment and its people but can also empower them to enhance good governance and information dissemination, which are essential ingredients for FDL.

Literature can not be taught without books. I therefore call on the members of Ohuhu Development Union here in the US and UK to take steps to revamp and replenish libraries in Ohuhu primary and secondary schools with quantitative and qualitative books. Peterson (1992) confirms the need for books in any result-oriented literacy program. He asserts that:

> *Books must be plentiful and accessible. Part of becoming literate is learning to live in a place where books are ready-to-hand and an accepted part of life and learning... It is not asking too much to expect that classrooms house books and teachers to demonstrate values that make turning into a book for information and enjoyment as the most natural thing to do in the world (Peterson, 1992. P.86).*

Peterson's position is also shared by Diangungu who asserts that:

> *Books provide the most effective means of disseminating and popularizing scientific and technological knowledge in Western countries (Daigu, 1977, Jacob, 1988, Sharafundin, 1986) where non fiction publications out-number fiction. If in these countries science and technology have become "common property", it is primarily because books are everywhere. That is not the case in Africa, the continent which as far as book production is concerned presents the grimiest picture (Diangungu, 1980 as cited in Binniakunu 1991, P. 105).*

Secondly, we also need to heed Binniakum's advice that:

> *If books haven't helped to enhance Africa's knowledge and skills at the grassroots level, it is because of the lack of books at that level. And we, the so-called African elites are to blame for Africa's hunger for books. This lack of books in turn is responsible for the lack of motivation in so many African literacy programs (Binniakuni, 1991 p.105).*

Finally, we must provide post-basic reading and writing activities if the adults are not to lapse into illiteracy. We should realize that:

> *Every year millions of adults learn to read. Every year hundreds of thousands forget how to read because there are few post basic literacy materials and few services to help new readers use their skills (Basista et al 1986 p.6).*

If we put in place community newsletter and magazines in which our people share their experiences and emotions, then we would have provided a forum for them to practice their literacy skills. If the content of FDL is tailored to meet the specific professions of our people so that they can keep and maintain simple accounts and journals of their activities, then the opportunity for them to continue to practice literacy would have been catered for.

In ending this address, I want to suggest that we put in place an annual **Literacy Festival**. This festival should bring together all Ohuhu sons and daughters to celebrate our cultural and literacy heritage and growth. During the celebrations prizes and accolades should be given to Ohuhu sons and daughters who distinguish themselves in the humanities, natural, agricultural, health, social sciences and law. When Ohuhu daughters and sons see that there is honor and dignity in promoting the educational development of Ohuhu, they will commit themselves towards acquiring the basic and fundamental germ – **literacy empowerment** - that would empower them to contribute to the attainment of sustainable development in

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Ohuhu land. In that way our lost glory would have been regained and Ohuhu repositioned to give leadership in all walks life to our countrymen and women and to the rest of the world.

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